



San Diego City Attorney CASEY GWINN

MEDIA RELEASE

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LOCAL MOTEL OWNERS COURT-ORDERED OUT OF THE CRIME BUSINESS

Drug Abatement Response Team Shuts Down Motel Plagued by Prostitution and Drugs

San Diego, CA (July 18, 2000) -- A San Diego couple, who operated a local motel plagued with prostitution and drug activity, is out of the motel business, in the City of San Diego at least, thanks to the efforts of the City's Drug Abatement Response Team. Today, the owners of the Travel Time Motel pled no contest to criminal charges of maintaining a disorderly house, maintaining a public nuisance, and failing to produce the motel's guest register when asked by police. The owners also admitted they were in violation of a civil injunction issued against them. San Diego Superior Court Judge Thomas Murphy placed Chiu-Chi Chiang and Jiin-Fong Kao Chiang on probation for three years and ordered them to sell their motel at 5447 El Cajon Boulevard and to pay more than \$47,000 in costs to the City of San Diego. The defendants are also ordered not to own or operate any motels within the City of San Diego. If they fail to comply, they risk going to jail -- for up to two years in the case of Chiu-Chi Chiang.

For the past three years, the Travel Time Motel has been the subject of an ongoing investigation by the City's Drug Abatement Response Team, a partnership between the San Diego Police Department, Neighborhood Code Compliance, and the City Attorney's Office. In October 1998, the City Attorney obtained a civil injunction against the motel owners, ordering them to stop the public nuisance caused by the drug and prostitution activity occurring at the motel. In 1999, an undercover operation documented that the defendants were failing to comply with the civil injunction and were continuing to allow drug and prostitution activity to occur. In November 1999, the San Diego Police Department seized the motel's business records. Based on this information and the frequent arrests on the property, the City Attorney filed criminal charges against the owners.

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LOCAL MOTEL SHUT DOWN BY DRUG ABATEMENT TEAM

July 18, 2000

Page 2

"This case exemplifies what we can accomplish when DART deputies work in partnership with the San Diego Police Department, Neighborhood Code Compliance, and the community to address these serious community problems," said City Attorney Casey Gwinn. "We received information from community members, who were concerned about children at a nearby elementary school seeing the criminal activity and the trash -- prostitution and narcotics paraphernalia -- left behind. We responded to that concern. Today, we have a resolution that benefits the community."

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